



9 January 2006

### **Martin Luther King, Jr., Day Holiday Weekend Safety**

1. On 16 January 2006 our country will commemorate the life of a great civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King was a pivotal figure in the civil rights movement, which brought significant changes to the American way of life. Our Army is a leader in equality and consideration of others, and continues to lead our Nation in promoting Dr. King's vision.
  2. I have designated 13 January as a USAREUR Training Holiday to give Soldiers some much-needed time off. I encourage each of you to use the holiday weekend to enjoy some well-deserved rest and relaxation with your families and friends, and to revitalize your spirit. I also ask that you remain vigilant in your efforts to ensure your safety as well as that of your loved ones and your "battle buddies."
  3. While many of us will enjoy the extended weekend, others will be on duty working to deploy and redeploy USAREUR units. As we continue to support the Global War on Terrorism, I ask you to remain vigilant as you manage the risks associated with your on and off-duty activities. I am especially concerned about the risks related to the movement of Soldiers and equipment during these winter months. Driving conditions at this time of year add additional risk factors to an already hazardous activity. We must remember to consider the factors of fewer hours of daylight, black ice, fog, and snow when planning operations. When we prepare for combat, we conduct pre-combat inspections on ourselves, our equipment, and our Soldiers. We also use deliberate planning and composite risk-management fundamentals to plan our operations. Use these risk-management procedures when making your on- and off-duty plans.
  4. I also ask that you look out for one another. We may not be able to control the behavior of our fellow Soldiers, but we can have a positive effect when they display poor judgment or exhibit risky behavior. Recently, one of our Soldiers was seriously hurt during a physical encounter at a drinking establishment. I firmly believe the encounter could have been prevented through early intervention of a battle buddy.
- **Soldiers:** You and your fellow Soldiers are proud and vital members of the USAREUR Team. Do not do anything that would jeopardize your life or the lives of your family members and battle buddies. If you see someone behaving irresponsibly, step in, intervene, and make a difference.
  - **Leaders:** Continue to talk with and check on your Soldiers, and ensure they understand what constitutes risky behavior. *Under the Oak Tree* counseling between Soldiers and first-line leaders is paramount. This verbal dialog is critical to preventing the loss of the Army's most precious asset: its Soldiers.
5. Your personal involvement and genuine concern for your fellow Soldiers and battle buddies will make a difference this weekend and ultimately save lives. Doing so will also help ensure that we continue to lead the Army with our accident-prevention efforts and protect our most precious resource—our people!

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Commanding

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